

Exhibit 26

DOCTOR STRANGE



DITKO-0312



Dr. Strange

by

STAN LEE

ALSO BY STAN LEE

Origins of Marvel Comics

Son of Origins

Bring on the Bad Guys

Superhero Women

How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way

The Incredible Hulk

The Silver Surfer

The Mighty World of Marvel Pin-Up Book

Marvel's Greatest Superhero Battles

The Amazing Spider-Man

The Mighty Marvel Jumbo Fun Book



A FIRESIDE BOOK

Published by

SIMON AND SCHUSTER • New York

~~~~~DEDICATION~~~~~

Dedicated to Steve Ditko, who gave such fabulous form, substance, and style to our Master of the Mystic Arts when Stephen Strange was just a'borning, and who set the mood for an aura of exotic enchantment destined to thrill generations of readers for decades to come

Dedicated also to Phil De Guere, who, almost twenty years later, had both the faith and the rare ability to take our creation of Dr. Strange and translate it with such sincerity and talent into a brilliant, unforgettable television experience.

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Here's a twist for you! The story that follows never appeared in a *Dr. Strange* magazine! It's not even a *Dr. Strange* story. It's a *Spider-Man* special! But, as Stevey Strange himself might say, "By the shades of the shadowy Seraphim, there's more to this than doth meet the eye!"

Actually, "The Wondrous World of Dr. Strange" is from the *Spider-Man Annual* #2. We wanted a yarn that would be really special, something that would verily rock our rabid readers. So, since ol' Steve Ditko was illustrating both *Dr. Strange* and *Spidey* at the time, it seemed like a natural to let Doc be the featured guest star in the web slinger's commemorative issue.

Then, to make it even more special, I figured it would be supersplendiferous to let Daring Ditko himself dream up the plot. Of course, I may have had a secondary little reason—like the fact that I didn't have the time to plot it myself and Samaritan Steve practically saved my life by handling that little chore. But that's nobody's business but ours, right?

Speaking of plotting, let me tell you here and now (which is one of the nuttiest phrases of all time—I certainly couldn't tell you there and then, could I? I mean, you can't ever be over there, 'cause wherever you are at a given time is always "here"! I hope you're all taking notes. There may be an exam!) Now where were we? Oh yes, I was gonna clue you in about our plotting. In case I never told you this before, Steve Ditko is one of the best plot men in the biz. When it comes to dreaming up story ideas, putting them together intricately, panel by panel, and utilizing the best of cinematic techniques, the guy's a whiz. Thus, the spectacular saga that is about to knock you out was basically concocted by our own Mr. D. But in case you're wondering what yours truly had to do with it...

Somebody has to put in the words. Lamentable as it may seem, they simply don't appear by magic. So, that's my job. After Steve did the hard part—after he dreamed up the story and illustrated it in his own unique style—I then got to do the fun part. I wrote all the squiggly little words: the dialog balloons and captions, the soliloquies and the snide remarks, and all the little sound effects that drove Steve bonkers 'cause they cluttered up his artwork! Yep, that's how we did it, and I hope you dig the daffy result.

Of course, the thing I liked the very best was putting in the little unexpected wisecracks (at least, I hope they were unexpected) wherever and whenever I had the chance. And names! How I love making up names! It took me as long to come up with Xandu as it did to write the first six pages! And don't blame me if it sounds like something out of Kipling; I like to kipple with the best of 'em!

But, about the story. I've a hunch it's gonna knock you out when you see how *Spidey* and Doc cross paths and get involved in the same adventure, and I think their relationship and attitudes toward each other worked out exactly the way you would have wanted. If I'm right, I know you'll be impressed. If I'm wrong, don't tell me—you wouldn't wanna damage my ego!

But enough pointless prattle. One of the most memorable stories of all is waiting on the pages ahead—and you know how impatient us sorcerers get!